DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 219 904 EC 143 185

AUTHOR Fimian, Michael J.; Santoro, Theresa M.
TITLE Correlates of Occupational Stress as Reported by Full Time Special Education Teachers: I: Sources of Stress.
SPONS AGENCY Connecticut Univ., Storrs.
PUB DATE Apr 81
GRANT 5171-000-22-0401-35-817
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (60th, Houston, TX, April 11-16, 1982, Session Th-76).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Special Education Teachers; *Stress Variables; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Burnout; Teaching (Occupation)

ABSTRACT

The study reported the results of a statewide teacher stress survey conducted with 365 full time special education teachers in Connecticut. Dependent variable ratings for the degree of intensity and the degree of frequency of 25 sources of teacher stress and burnout were examined. Of the 365 respondents, 58 were identified as low stress, 250 as moderate stress, and 57 as high stress teachers. Among findings were that the strongest and most frequent sources of stress included inadequate salary, frustration over lack of time for individual students, and frustration because of poor attitudes and behaviors of the administration. A strong relationship was found between reported strength means and frequency means. Other findings included that many teachers felt that their personal priorities were being shortchanged by professional time demands, that many of the teachers surveyed enjoy and are satisfied with their jobs regardless of the moderate to high stress levels that may be incurred, and that significantly more members of the low stress group reported not taking mental health days than did the members of the medium or high stress groups. Charts and tables with statistical data are included, along with statistics corresponding to individual questionnaire items. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED219904

Correlates of Occupational Stress as Reported by Full Time Special Education Teachers: I: Sources of Stress

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Michael J. Fimian
Doctoral Fellow
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Connecticut
Storrs, Connecticut 02268

Theresa M. Santoro
Consultant
Hartford Association for the Education of Young Children
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

April, 1981

This project was funded by the University of Connecticut Research Foundation, Storrs, Connecticut through the Office of the Vice President for Graduate Education and Research, under Grant Award #5171-000-22-0401-35-817.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michael J. Fimian

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC 143185

Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the
Council for Exceptional Children (60th, Houston, TX, April 11-16, 1982)

ABSTRACT

This study reports the results of a state-wide teacher stress survey conducted with 58 low-stress, 250 moderate-stress, and 57 high-stress teachers (total N=365). Dependent variable ratings for the degree of intensity (How Strong?) and the degree of frequency (How Often?) of 25 sources of teacher stress and burnout are reported. Results include: (a) the relative frequencies and means of the most frequently and strongest occurring of 25 sources of stress as reported by the teacher sample; (b) statistically significant correlations between the strength and frequency measures of each item, for all 25 items; (c) statistically significant correlations between the rank orders of all strength and all frequency measures; and (d) statistically significant differences between/among the means of the high-stress, medium-stress, and low-stress teacher groups. Also reported were sample characteristics and significant group differences between/among stress level groups for eight background variables.

Correlates of Occupational Stress as Reported by Full Time Special Education Teachers: I: Sources of Stress

It is no simple matter determining the extent of stress and burnout phenomena in special education. This is partially due to the lack of an operational definition for each. It is also due to the fact that there exist few reliable and valid data that accurately reflect the frequency of the problems faced by special education teachers under stress, and the perceived strength of these problems when they do occur. The intent of this article is to report data pertinent to the latter concern.

There is presently a growing nationwide interest among special education teachers about the status of their on-the-job mental health. Prior to 1980, information about stress-related aspects of one's teaching role was rather sparse, consisting only of a handful of articles and a few paperbacks that purportedly teach the reader how to control stress before it kills him or her (Culligan and Sedlacek, 1979), how to relax (Benson, 1975; Rathbone, 1969), how to achieve tranquility without pills (Robbins and Fisher, 1972), and how to harness the power of stress for productive purposes (Selye, 1974). More recently, however, interest in teacher stress has burgeoned (Cherniss, 1980; Cox, 1980; Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980; Fimian, 1980; Greenburg and Vellututti, 1980; Pointer; Truch, 1980). Nevertheless, with the exception of a small number of articles and dissertations (Anderson, 1980; Cichon and Koff, 1980; Maslach and Jackson, 1979; Schwab, 1980), what has not been produced are data-based studies that would verify and describe the parameters of this phenomenon in special education teacher populations. Clearly, little is

presently known about the true prevalence, incidence, degree, frequency, and effects of stress upon full time special education teachers.

What environmental and predispositional factors act as sources for special education teachers? The sources of stress are numerous, and can be summarized on an a priori basis in one or more of thirteen different categories: (a) personal competence, (b) self-relationship, (c) conflicting values, (d) social approval, (e) isolation, (f) expectations, (g) self-fulfillment, (h) deficiencies in the physical environment, (i) unmet ego-needs, (j) self-inflicted stress, (k) professional constraints, (l) student-teacher relationships, and (m) miscellaneous demands placed upon the teacher (after Styles and Cavanagh, 1977).

Other environmental and predispositional stressors such as rape, robbery, physical assault, over crowded classrooms, a lack of professional mobility, inadequate salaries, and monotony and depression can also be added to this list (Block, 1978; Gann, 1979; Instructor, 1979).

It is generally assumed that special education teachers have their own particular job-related sources of stress. In addition, it is reasonable to expect that, given a random sample of teachers, certain teachers would report high-stress levels, others low-stress levels, and a majority moderate-stress levels. It is also reasonable to expect that high-stress teachers would differ significantly from low-stress and moderate-stress teachers on a number of job stress source variables. Do certain sources of stress occur more frequently or with greater strength than do others? Is the occurrence of these, either in terms of strength or frequency, evenly distributed among a random sample of special education teachers? And, finally, in what stress

source variables do high-stress teachers differ significantly from their moderate-stress and low-stress colleagues?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to: (a) identify and compare the strongest and most frequently occurring sources of stress in special education teachers; and (b) compare teachers who report high-stress levels with those who report low-stress and moderate-stress levels by determining what significant differences, if any, exist between the three teacher groups.

Method

Subjects. The sample for this study consisted of 365 full time special education teachers, randomly selected from sixty-one towns in the state of Connecticut.[1] Twenty-eight percent of 2,881 special education teachers (or N=800) were provided with cover letters, questionnaires, and return envelopes. Three-hundred-sixty five (365), or 47 percent of the total sample, returned the questionnaires.

Of the 365 respondents, 58 were identified as low-stress teachers, 250 as moderate-stress teachers, and 57 as high-stress teachers. Low-stress teachers were defined as those whose total scores exceeded the first negative standard deviation from the total score mean for the entire sample of 365 teachers ($\overline{X}$ = 67.06); moderate-stress teachers' total scores were within $\pm$ 1 standard deviation from the total score mean for the entire sample; high-stress teachers' total scores exceeded the first positive standard deviation from the same total score mean. Teachers with total scores of 32.5 or less, therefore, were classified as low-stress teachers; those with total scores of 101.7 or more were classified as high-stress teachers; those with scores in the mid-range were classified as moderate-stress teachers. (For information regarding the derivation of total scores for the stress scale, note Fimian [1981].)

Variables. The dependent variables were the degree of intensity (How Strong?) and the degree of frequency (How Often?) of various reported sources of stress, and emotional, behavioral, and physiological manifestations of stress in special education teachers, is measured by the Special Education Teacher Stress (SETS) questionnaire. The Likert-type ratings for the strength and frequency dimensions are noted in Table 1. (In this article, only data related to the sources of occupational stress are reported.)

Insert Table 1 about here

Data concerning a number of background independent personal and professional variables were drawn from the first two sections of the questionnaire. Respondent characteristics of the sample in terms of these personal and professional variables are noted in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Instrumentation. The 5-page SETS questionnaire is composed of six sections. Section I (Personal Information) and Section II (Professional Information) consist of 21 questions that address a number of personal, demographic, and professional variables (note Table 2). Section III (Sources of Stress) consists of 25 items representing the following categories of stress sources: Personal and Professional Causes, Expectations, Student-Teacher Relationships, and Demands of Teaching. All stress source items were drawn from the list shown in Figure 1. Section IV (Manifestations of Stress) consists of 24 items representing Emotional and Behavioral Manifestations of teacher stress. Section V (Physiological Symptoms of Stress) consists of 16 items representing gastronomic, cardio-vascular, and miscellaneous symptoms of teacher stress. In addition, a sixth and Optional Comments section provided each respondent

with the opportunity to volunteer pertinent comments.

The respondent answered each question in Sections I and II by providing short one-word answers, checking the frequency of a given event, or checking a given Likert scale or "check the most appropriate answer" type of question. Each item in Sections III, IV, and V was of the short statement or phrase format, and was rated twice--once to show the frequency of feeling or occurrence of a stress-related phenomenon, and once to indicate the strength of the feeling or occurrence of the phenomenon (note Table 1). Sections III, IV, and V of the SETS questionnaire consisted of a total of sixty-five (65) items.[2]

Content validity, construct validity, and internal consistency reliability data for the special education teacher stress survey are noted elsewhere (Fimian, 1981).

Procedure. During Spring, 1980, the SETS questionnaire was developed and reproduced. Eight-hundred (800) questionnaires were mailed during the first week in May; three-hundred-sixty-five (365) were returned on or before July 1, or within ten days after the end of the 1979-1980 public school year. Therefore, each respondent completed and returned his/her questionnaire during the last month of the 1979-1980 school year.

Results

A number of results were evident, and will be reported in terms of both general and relative frequencies and means and significant findings yielded from one-way analyses of variance.

The distribution of total scores for the 365 teacher respondents is noted in Figure 2. High-stress and low-stress cut-off points are shown, and both groups indicated by the shaded areas.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The fifteen strongest and most frequent sources of stress, as reported by the 365 respondents, are shown in Table 3. Five "Personal and Professional Causes" items were ranked as being moderately-strong to strong and as occurring moderately-frequently to very-frequently: inadequate salary, personal priorities that are shortchanged, a lack of professional recognition, a need for enhanced job status, and a lack of promotion or advancement opportunities. One "Expectations" item was ranked as being moderately strong and as occurring moderately frequently: not being able to live up to others' expectations in terms of one's own performance. Four "Student-Teacher Relationships" variables were also ranked as moderate-to-very-strong and frequently occurring: feeling a lack of time to spend with individual students; feeling frustrated because of having to constantly monitor pupil behavior; feeling frustrated having to teach poorly motivated students; and feeling frustrated because of inadequate discipline policies. Additionally, five "Demands of Teaching" variables were reported: feeling frustrated because of poor attitudes and behaviors on the part of administration; having little time to adequately prepare for lessons and other teaching responsibilities; having too large a case load; having to teach groups that consist of too-wide an ability spread; and feeling isolated from the rest of the world. Stress source items, strength and frequency means and standard deviations, and the rank orders of strength and frequency means are noted in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

In reviewing the rank order of the twenty-five sources of stress, a strong relationship between reported strength means and frequency means becomes evident. For example, the nine strongest stressors were also reported as being the nine most frequently occurring. In short, many of the reported sources of job-related stress not only occur frequently and with mild-to-great strength, but the

strongest occurring stress sources are also those that occur most frequently. This strong relationship is evident between the relative frequency and relative strength of each source item. A comparison of the rank order of all strength measures and the rank order of all frequency measures for the sources and manifestations items yielded a Kendall *tau* correlation coefficient of .67 ($p \leq .001$). Pearson product moment coefficients, which indicate the degree to which the frequency measure of each variable is related to the strength measure of that same variable, fell in the moderate to high ranges as well. Pearson *r* coefficients ranged from .50 to .85, with a coefficient of .80 representing the overall relationship between all strength and frequency scores for the sources and manifestations items.

Means and standard deviations of high-stress, medium-stress, and low-stress teachers' frequency and strength scores were computed; differences between means and standard deviations for high-stress teachers (N=57), medium-stress teachers (N=250), and low-stress teachers (N=58) were analyzed using one-way analyses of variance. One frequency score and one strength score per item were used in the statistical analyses, and a significance level of .05 selected. The results showed significant differences on both measures among the three teacher groups for each of the twenty-five stress source variables, as noted in Table 4. With the exception of the group mean differences on the frequency of stress caused by teacher evaluation ($F = 5.9$, $df = 2/362$, $p \leq .01$) and an overemphasis on teacher supervision ($F = 21.5$, $df = 2/362$, $p \leq .001$), the frequency and strength of all other variables was highly significant (F range = 14.3 to 72.4, $df = 2/362$, $p \leq .001$).

Insert Table 4 about here

Only in the case of the former two frequency variables were the differences between the low-stress and medium-stress group means nonsignificantly different.

In these same examples, the high-stress group mean was significantly different from those of the low- and medium-stress groups. The following group differences were found to be consistent across all other variables: (a) low-stress group means were significantly smaller than those reported for medium-stress and high-stress groups; (b) medium-stress means were significantly larger than low-stress means, and significantly smaller than the high-stress group means; and (c) high-stress means were significantly larger than low- and moderate-stress group means. The conservative Scheffé test was used to determine the means between which significant differences existed. It was found that low-stress teachers consistently scored significantly lower than the medium- and high-stress teachers, and that high-stress teachers consistently scored significantly higher than medium- and low-stress teachers, with respect to two measures each for twenty-five stress source variables. Group frequency and strength means and standard deviations for each stress source variable are reported in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 about here

Discussion

Results of the general frequencies and means per stress source item for the special education teachers surveyed indicate that many of these teachers often find themselves in stressful work environments. One-fourth (25.5%) of the 365 respondents reported having attended workshops related to job stress and fully half (49.3%) take mental health days regularly due to job-related tension and stress. Also, 7.4% reported having received, or are receiving, professional counseling services for problems related to stress and burnout. Fifty-six percent (56%) felt that their previous training did not adequately

prepare them for their teaching jobs. Also, whereas 82.2% of the total sample reported giving and receiving peer support on a regular basis, only 22.5% reported the same for administrative support.

Over one-quarter (26.8%) reported that their views toward teaching became more positive since they began teaching, while over half (50.4%) of the total sample's views were reported as becoming more negative. Phrased differently, for every teacher whose attitudes toward his or her profession became more positive over time, those of one other teacher remained the same, and those of two other teachers became more negative. On the other hand, although 15.7% of the sample reported being only somewhat satisfied or unsatisfied with their jobs, 46.3% reported being generally to very satisfied. Finally, 87.1% of the sample reported their jobs as being moderately to very stressful with almost forty-six percent (45.8%) reporting much to very much stress. Apparently, many of the teachers in this sample do enjoy and are satisfied with their jobs, regardless of the moderate to high stress levels that may be incurred.

In the area of "personal professional sources of stress," it is clear that many of the teachers felt that their personal priorities were being shortchanged by professional time demands. Also, many strongly and frequently felt that they lack recognition, promotion, and advancement opportunities, desired to progress in their jobs more than they had, and felt a need for enhanced status and respect on the job. Not surprisingly in today's climate of shifting federal priorities, and due to the fact that teachers now earn only about 80% of what they used to in terms of real purchasing power (Ornstein, 1980), individual economies are very much on the minds of many teachers. However, closely behind this strongest and most frequent source of stress are a number of unmet personal and professional needs.

In the area of "expectations," only self-expectations that acted as predispositional stressors were rated as being moderately strong and only infrequently occurring. Others' expectations acted as sources of stress much less strongly and frequently.

"Student-teacher relationships" was rated overall as a major source of stress with all four items included in the 60% of the items reported in Table 3. Not only did teachers feel moderately strong stress fairly often due to a lack of time to spend with individual pupils, they felt frustrated having to constantly monitor pupil behavior, having to teach poorly motivated pupils, and because of inadequate discipline policies in effect in their schools and/or districts.

Also, a number of "teaching demands" stress sources were rated as having moderate strength and as being fairly frequent. Feeling that there is little time for adequate preparation, that the pace of the school day is too fast, and that one's classroom or caseload is too big were often reported as sources of stress. Also, having to teach groups of too-wide-an-ability spread, feeling cut off from the rest of the world, and feeling frustrated because of poor attitudes and behaviors on the part of administration were also reported within the moderate-strength and fairly-frequent ranges.

Kendall tau and Pearson product moment coefficients indicate that not only is the frequency of each stress source's occurrence significantly related to that item's strength score, but the order in which each measure's items are ranked according to their means is significantly related when cross-measures (i.e., strength-frequency) comparisons are made. Generally, the more frequently an item occurs, the stronger it is rated as a self-perceived source of stress. Conversely, those least frequently occurring are the least strong as well.

Thus far, the teacher under stress has been studied only in light of his or her special education colleagues. The next question addresses how highly stressed teachers, as a group, differ from a similar group of moderately or little stressed teachers with respect to the twenty-five stress source variables. Does each group differ from the others, and if so, in what areas and to what degree are these differences evident? And, finally, in what ways are the groups significantly different from one another.

Significant F ratios between teacher groups for eight teacher background variables and twenty-five stress source variables were found. High-, medium-, and low-stress teacher groups differed significantly on the following variables: mental health days taken, counseling services received, administrative and peer support received, the development of positive views or negative views towards teaching, the degree of job satisfaction, and the perceived degree of job stress related to one's job. No significant sex differences between or among teacher groups were identified.

Significantly more members of the low-stress group reported not taking mental health days than did the members of the medium- or high-stress groups. Also, the same approximate number of members of the medium- and high-stress groups reported taking mental health days because of stress ($F = 9.2$, $df = 2/362$, $p < .001$). In addition, significantly more of the high-stress group reported receiving counseling services than did members of the medium- and low-stress groups ($F = 8.6$, $df = 2/362$, $p < .001$).

Support on the job was also a variable upon which significant group differences were found. Significantly more low-stress teachers reported receiving administrative support than those members of the medium- and high-stress groups. Conversely, significantly more medium- and high-stress group members reported <u>not</u> being supported by members of their administration

(F = 6.7, df = 2/362, p = 001). Also, no significant differences were found among group means on the variable peer support. That is, approximately equal proportions of respondents across groups reported receiving or not receiving peer support.

Changing attitudes towards one's job is also closely related to job stress levels. For example, a significantly larger membership of the low-stress group reported that their views had become more positive since they started teaching than those members of the medium- and high-stress groups (F = 25.5, df = 2/362, p < .001). Conversely, a significantly larger membership of the high-stress group reported that their views of teaching had become more negative since the onset of their careers, with respect to the memberships of the moderate- and low-stress groups (F = 10.1, df = 2/362, p < .001).

Perceived levels of job satisfaction and job stress were also significantly related to stress levels. Low-stress teachers reported significantly more job satisfaction than did medium- or high-stress teachers. Also, medium-stress group means were significantly larger than those of the low-stress group, but significantly less than those of the high-stress group (F = 36.1, df = 2/362, p < .001). In short, high-stress teachers were significantly more dissatisfied with their jobs than medium-stress teachers who, in turn, were significantly more dissatisfied than low-stress teachers. The same pattern was evident when comparing group means for perceived levels of job stress. The medium-stress group reported significantly larger perceived stress means than did the low-stress group, and significantly smaller means than the high-stress group (F = 36.7, df - 2/362, p < .001). Insofar as each stress group accurately rated their perceived level of stress, how stressful one perceives one's job, therefore, may be an accurate representation of how stressful that job really is.

One-way analyses of variance of the twenty-five job stress items indicate

that, with the exception of the frequency with which teacher evaluation and supervision is reported to occur, teacher ratings on the stress source variables across all three stress levels were quantitatively different to a significant degree. In the case of almost every variable listed in Table 4, high-stress teachers were subject to a significantly greater degree of stress significantly more often than were all other teachers, including those subject only to moderate-stress. In short, not only did high-stress teachers report significantly larger strength and frequency means than did moderate-stress teachers, these same moderate-stress teachers reported significantly greater strength and frequency means than did the low-stress teachers. This trend becomes more evident when comparing within-measure means across the three group conditions in Table 5.

Special education teachers encounter stress, as do professionals and paraprofessionals in other "human services" jobs (Maslach and Jackson, 1979). Though the prevalence and incidence levels of teacher stress may not have reached the epidemic proportions accepted by popular belief, a problem does, nevertheless, exist in a large percentage of special education teachers. Only further investigations of stress sources and stress manifestations will clarify this issue.

Footnotes

[1]Note that this survey was conducted on a random sample of special education teachers, and not teachers chosen for high stress levels or who have been drawn from professional organizations or teacher union rosters.

[2]Contact the author for additional information regarding the questionnaire.

REFERENCES

Anderson, M. B. A study of differences among perceived need deficiencies, perceived burnout, and select background variables for classroom teachers. Doctoral Dissertation. Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs, 1980.

Benson, H. The relaxation response. New York: Avon Books, 1975.

Block, A. M. Combat neurosis in inner-city schools. American Journal of Psychiatry, 1978, 135(10), 1189-1192.

Cherniss, C. Staff burnout: Job stress in the human services. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980.

Cichon, D. J. and Koff, R. H. Stress and teaching. NASSP Bulletin, 1980, 64(434) 91,104.

Cox, T. Stress. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press, 1979.

Culligan, M. J. and Sedlacek, K. How to avoid stress before it kills you. New York: Gramercy Publishing Company, 1979.

Edilwich, J. and Brodsky, A. Burn-out: Stages of disillusionment in the helping professions. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980.

Fimian, M. J. Stress reduction techniques for teachers. Pointer, 1980a, 1(2), 64-70.

Fimian, M. J. The development of an instrument to measure occupational stress in teachers of exceptional students. Manuscript submitted for publication. Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs, 1981.

Gann, M. The role of personality factors and job characteristics in burnout: A study of social service workers. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1979.

Greenberg, S. F. and Valletutti, P. J. Stress and the helping professions. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, Publishers, 1980.

(Instructor). Teacher burnout: How to cope when the world goes black. Instructor, 1979, LXXXVIII(6), 56-62.

Maslach, C. and Jackson, S. E. The measurement of experienced burnout. University of California at Berkeley, 1979.

Ornstein, A. C. Teacher salaries: Past, present, future. Phi Delta Kappan, June 1980, 677-679.

The Pointer, 1980a, 9(2), entire journal.

Robbins, J. and Fisher, D. Tranquility without pills. New York: Bantam Books, 1972.

Rathbone, J. L. Relaxation. Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger Publishing Co., 1969.

Schwab, R. L. An analysis of the relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity, personal variables, and perce ved burnout among teachers. Doctoral dissertation. Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs, 1980.

Selye, H. Stress without distress. New York: Signet Publishing Co., 1974.

Styles, K. and Cavanagh, G. Stress in teaching and how to handle it. English Journal, January, 1977.

Truch, S. Teacher burnout and what to do about it. Novato, CA: Academic Therapy Publications, 1980.

Figure 2. Frequency distribution of the total scores for 365 full time special education teachers. High-stress and low-stress groups are indicated by the shaded areas.

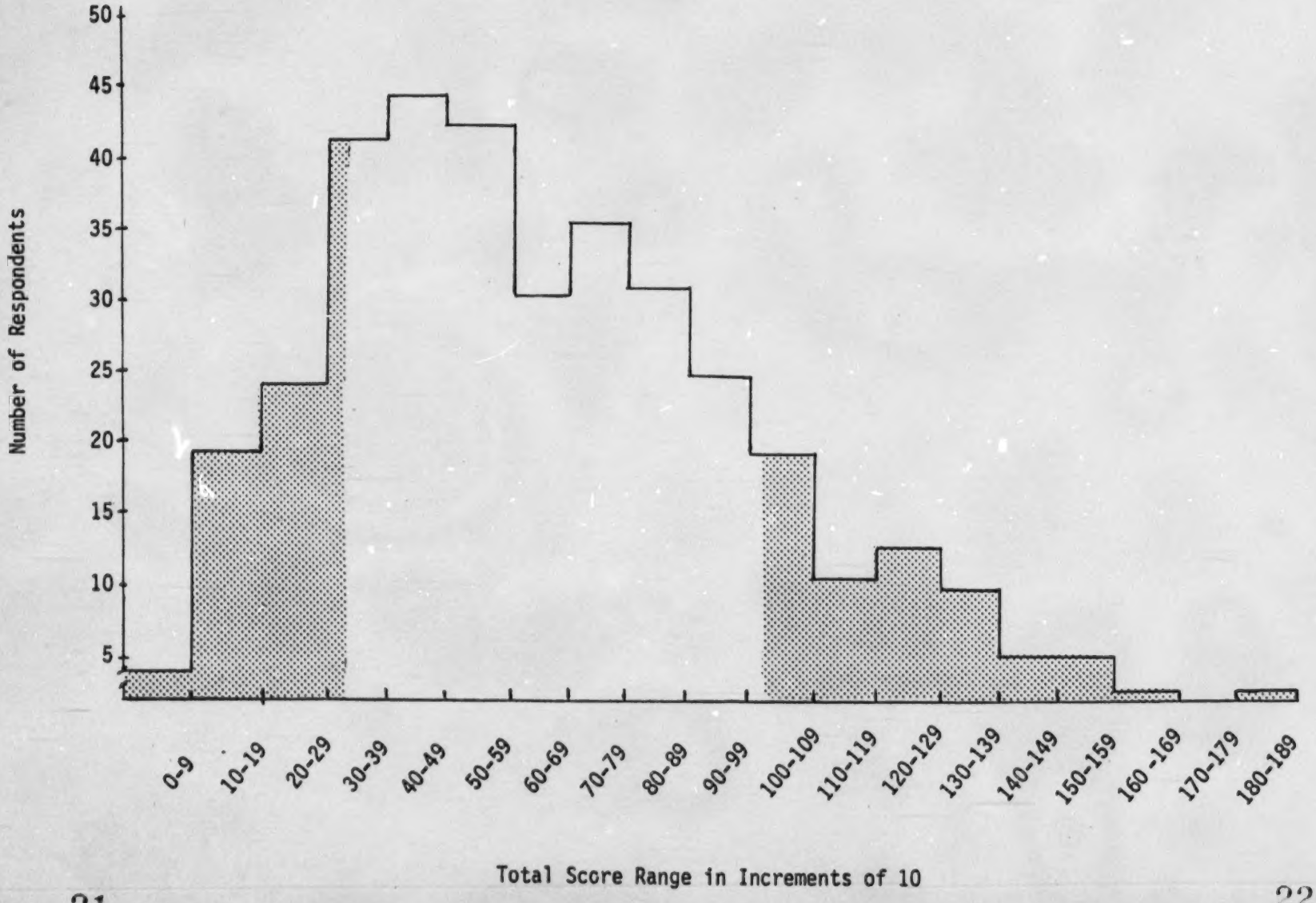

Table 1

Strength and Frequency Ratings of Sources, Manifestations, and Symptoms of Stress
(Source: Adapted from Maslach, C. and Jackson, S. The measurement of experienced burnout. Unpublished manuscript, University of California at Berkeley, 1979)

Survey Statement	Explanation	Rating Scales						
How Strong?	Strength of Occurrence	1 Of Very Mild Strength Barely Noticeable	2	3 Of Medium Strength/Moderately Noticeable	4	5 Of Major Strength/Very Noticeable		
How Often?	Frequency of Occurence	1 Never	2 A Few Times a Year	3 Once a Month	4 A Few Times a Month	5 Once a Week	6 A Few Times a Week	7 Every Day

Table 2

Personal and Professional Characteristics of the Sample

(N=365)

Variable	Categories	Frequency Reported (N/365)	Percent of Total Sample[a]
	Personal Characteristics		
Sex	Male	67	18.4
	Female	297	81.3
Age	19 or under	7	1.9
	20-24	73	20.0
	25-29	137	37.5
	30-34	62	17.0
	35-39	23	6.3
	40-44	20	5.5
	45-49	20	5.5
	50 or over	21	5.8
Length of Certified Teaching Experience	1 year	24	6.6
	2-3 yrs.	99	27.1
	4-5 yrs.	63	17.3
	6-7 yrs.	47	12.9
	8-9 yrs.	21	5.8
	10 years or over	76	20.8
Highest Level of Educational Experience	BA or BS	125	34.2
	MA or MS	114	31.2
	MA or MS plus	100	27.4
	PhD/EdD	5	1.4
	Other	19	5.2
Prior Workshop Attendance	Yes	93	25.5
	No	271	74.3
Mental Health Days Taken	Yes	180	49.3
	No	150	41.2
Prior or Current Counseling	Yes	27	7.4
	No	332	90.9
	Professional Characteristics		
Type of Site	Rural	104	28.5
	Suburban	219	60.0
	Urban	23	6.3
	Other	17	3.6
Type of Facility	Public	274	75.1
	Private	4	1.4
	Residential	50	13.7

[a]Percentages for missing cases are not included.

Table 2 -- *Continued*

Personal and Professional Characteristics of the Sample (N=365)

Variable	Categories	Frequency Reported (N/365)	Percent of Total Sample
	Professional Characteristics		
Number of Students Taught per Day	2-4	36	9.9
	5-7	61	16.7
	8-10	59	16.2
	11-13	43	11.8
	14-16	53	14.5
	17-19	26	7.1
	20 or over	81	22.2
Type of Handicapped Children Worked With[b]	Mentally Retarded	62(124)[b]	17.0(34.0)
	Emotionally Disturbed	22(121)	6.0(33.2)
	Learning Disabled	75(183)	20.5(50.1)
	Deaf-Blind	8 (22)	2.2 (6.1)
	Cross of Multi-categorical	164	44.9
	Other	18	4.9
Perceived Adequacy of Previous Training	Yes	153	41.9
	No	204	55.9
Receipt of Administrative Support	Yes	82	22.5
	No	241	66.1
Provision or Receipt of Peer Support	Yes	300	82.2
	No	51	14.0
Have Views of Teaching Become More Positive	Yes	98	26.8
	No	247	67.7
Have Views of Teaching Become More Negative	Yes	184	50.4
	No	124	34.0
Degree of Job Satisfaction	Not Satisfied	17	4.7
	Somewhat Satisfied	40	11.0
	Moderately Satisfied	132	36.2
	Satisfied	120	32.9
	Very Satisfied	49	13.4
Degree of Job Change	Very Little	48	13.2
	Somewhat	40	11.0
	Moderately	93	25.5
	Much	64	17.5
	Very Much	110	30.1

[b]Percentages reported for categories other than "cross-" or "multi-categorical" are considered conservative. Many teachers in Connecticut (which follows the multi-categorical model to a great extent) reported one category and the multi-categorical category, while others reported "multi-categorical" in place of indicating individual categories. Corrected statistics in parentheses indicate the actual number of teachers who work with students of the specified category.

Table 2 -- *Continued*

Personal and Professional Characteristics of the Sample (N=365)

Variable	Categories	Frequency Reported (N/365)	Percent of Total Sample
	Professional Characteristics		
Degree of Perceived Job Stress	Very Little	12	3.3
	Little	35	9.6
	Moderately	117	32.1
	Much	101	27.7
	Very Much	66	18.1
Written Comment Included in the Survey	Yes	114	31.2
	No	249	68.2

Table 3

Special Education Teacher Stress Survey: Sources of Stress Ratings (N=365)

Rank Order by Strength[a]	Rank Order by Frequency	Item No.	Statement[b]	Strength Mean[c]	Strength S.D.	Frequency Mean[d]	Frequency S.D.
1	2	10	I feel that I receive an inadequate salary for the work I do.	3.5	1.6	4.3	2.2
2	1	14	I feel frustrated because I don't have enough time to spend with individual pupils.	3.4	1.5	4.5	2.1
3	4	23	I feel frustrated because of poor attitudes and behaviors on the part of administration.	3.3	1.6	4.0[h]	2.2
4	5	4	I feel that my personal priorities are being shortchanged due to professional time demands.	3.1[e]	1.5	3.8[i]	2.0
5	7	6	I feel that I lack recognition for the extra work and good teaching that I do.	3.1[f]	1.4	3.5[j]	1.9
6	3	15	I feel frustrated because I have to constantly monitor pupil behavior.	3.0	1.6	4.0[h]	2.3
7	6	18	I feel that there is little time to adequately prepare for my lessons and teaching responsibilities.	3.0	1.6	3.8[i]	2.1
8	8	8	I feel a need for enhanced status and respect on my job.	2.9	1.6	3.5[j]	2.1
9	9	17	I feel frustrated teaching poorly motivated students.	2.7	1.6	3.5[j]	2.1
10	12	20	I feel that my class/caseload is too big.	2.6[g]	1.6	3.2[k]	2.2
11	14	7	I feel that I lack promotion or advancement opportunities.	2.6[g]	1.7	3.1	2.3
12	13	16	I feel frustrated because of inadequate discipline policies of my school/district.	2.6[g]	1.7	3.2[k]	2.2
13	10	22	I feel that I am required to teach groups that consist of too-wide-an-ability spread.	2.6[g]	1.6	3.4	2.2
14	16	11	I feel that I will not be able to live up to my own expectations of performance.	2.6	1.5	2.9	1.8
15	11	25	I feel cut off from the rest of the real world when in my classroom.	2.5	1.6	3.3	2.3

[a] These authors have arbitrarily chosen to order the questionnaire items in terms of their strength ratings.

[b] Statements have been rank ordered strongest first, less-strong last. The ten least-strong sources of stress (## 16-25) have been omitted from this table for purposes of brevity.

[c] Strength means were computed based on the 5-point Likert-type scale used on the questionaire: 1 = of very mild strength/barely noticeable; 3 = of medium strength/moderately noticeable; 5 = of major strength/very noticeable.

[d] Frequency means were derived from the 7-point Likert-type scale used on the questionnaire: 1 = never; 2 = a few times a year; 3 = once a month; 4 = a few times a month; 5 = once a week; 6 = a few times a week; 7 = every day.

[e-k] Means between/among these item ratings are approximate, due to rounding. Actual rank ordering of means was done to the thousandths-place for each mean. The rank orders shown for both strength and frequency, therefore, represent the true order based on subjects' responses.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance Summaries of Frequency and Strength Measures for the Low-stress (N=58), Medium-stress (N=250), and High-stress (N=57) Teacher Groups

Abbreviated Item	Frequency SS	df	MS	F	Strength SS	df	MS	F
Personal and Professional Sources of Stress								
1 Teacher evaluation								
Between	14.7[a]	2	7.4	5.9**	76.2	2	38.1	21.8***
Within	453.4	362	1.3		632.9	362	1.7	
2 Fear of not meeting one's job demands								
Between	152.0	2	76.0	44.0***	142.9	2	71.5	41.8***
Within	626.1	362	1.7		618.5	362	1.7	
3 Feeling insufficiently prepared								
Between	79.4	2	39.7	24.4***	89.1	2	44.6	31.2***
Within	588.8	362	1.6		516.3	362	1.4	
4 Feeling that one's personal priorities are being shortchanged								
Between	266.6	2	133.3	40.9***	167.1	2	83.5	45.7***
Within	1179.8	362	3.3		661.7	362	1.8	
5 Feeling that one's contributions are of little worth								
Between	119.8	2	59.9	33.7***	115.6	2	57.5	27.8***
Within	643.8	362	1.8		748.2	362	2.1	
6 Lacking recognition for good work								
Between	283.4	2	141.7	50.5***	133.0	2	66.5	40.8***
Within	1015.3	362	2.8		589.7	362	1.6	
7 Lacking promotion opportunities								
Between	397.9	2	200.0	47.6***	190.4	2	95.2	39.3***
Within	1521.7	362	4.2		876.1	362	2.4	
8 Feeling a need for enhanced status and respect								
Between	440.3	2	220.1	65.0***	177.6	2	88.8	44.7***
Within	1226.9	362	3.4		719.5	362	2.0	
9 Feeling of not progressing in one's job								
Between	303.6	2	151.8	53.8***	161.0	2	80.5	41.4***
Within	1021.6	362	2.8		703.4	362	1.9	
10 Receiving an inadequate salary for the work that is done								
Between	401.2	2	200.6	51.6***	234.4	2	117.2	67.3***
Within	1407.6	362	3.9		630.5	362	1.7	
Expectations								
11 Feeling of not being able to meet own expectations								
Between	205.8	2	102.9	38.3***	150.3	2	75.1	41.8***
Within	972.6	362	2.7		650.9	362	1.8	
12 Fear of becoming incompetent								
Between	168.0	2	84.0	26.3***	143.3	2	71.6	33.2***
Within	1154.8	362	3.2		782.3	362	2.2	
13 Fear of not meeting other's expectations								
Between	196.6	2	98.3	38.3***	174.6	2	87.3	46.8***
Within	916.2	362	2.5		674.4	362	1.9	

Table 4 *(continued)*

Abbreviated Item	Frequency SS	df	MS	F	Strength SS	df	MS	F
Student-Teacher Relationships								
14 Lacking time for individual pupils								
Between	118.8	2	59.4	14.3***	58.9	2	29.5	14.8***
Within	1506.2	362	4.2		720.4	362	2.0	
15 Having to constantly monitor pupil behavior								
Between	526.3	2	263.2	72.4***	244.9	2	122.4	66.9***
Within	1315.6	362	3.6		662.1	362	1.8	
16 Inadequate discipline problems in school or district								
Between	340.1	2	170.0	42.7***	227.5	2	113.7	50.2***
Within	1442.1	362	4.0		820.8	362	2.3	
17 Having to teach poorly motivated students								
Between	387.4	2	193.7	54.6***	239.0	2	119.5	59.1***
Within	1283.8	362	3.5		731.6	362	2.0	
Demands of Teaching								
18 Too little time to adequately prepare for lessons								
Between	352.6	2	176.3	50.8***	183.4	2	91.7	53.2***
Within	1256.1	362	3.5		623.6	362	1.7	
19 Pace of school day is too fast								
Between	261.3	2	130.7	39.5***	109.9	2	55.0	31.0***
Within	1196.4	362	3.3		641.5	362	1.8	
20 Case load is too big								
Between	355.7	2	177.8	47.3***	158.8	2	79.4	40.9***
Within	1361.0	362	3.8		702.6	362	1.9	
21 Being held for unrealistic pupil gains								
Between	296.6	2	148.3	62.2***	191.8	2	95.9	54.6***
Within	863.5	362	2.4		636.0	362	1.8	
22 Having to teach groups of too-wide an ability spread								
Between	331.3	2	165.7	41.0***	154.9	2	77.4	35.7***
Within	1459.8	362	4.0		785.6	362	2.2	
23 Poor attitudes and behaviors on the part of administration								
Between	223.9	2	112.0	27.3***	117.9	2	59.0	26.8***
Within	1487.5	362	4.1		798.8	362	2.2	
24 Overemphasis on teacher supervision								
Between	110.2	2	55.1	21.5***	111.6	2	55.8	27.9***
Within	428.1	362	2.6		724.1	362	2.0	
25 Feeling isolated from rest of the world								
Between	338.0	2	169.0	40.6***	166.0	2	83.0	40.9***
Within	1505.0	362	4.2		735.3	362	2.0	

[a]All values are rounded to the nearest tenth.

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$
*** $p \leq .001$

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Frequency and Strength of Stress Source Variable Occurrence as Reported by Teachers in Low-stress (N=58), Medium-stress (N=250), and High-stress (N=57) Groups

Statement Number[a]	Frequency						Strength					
	Low-stress Teacher Group		Medium-stress Teacher Group		High-stress Teacher Group		Low-stress Teacher Group		Medium-stress Teacher Group		High-stress Teacher Group	
	$\bar{X}$[b]	SD[b]	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
Personal and Professional Causes												
1	1.9	0.8	2.1	1.1	2.6	1.3	1.8	1.2	2.4	1.3	3.4	1.4
2	1.5	0.7	2.4	1.3	3.8	1.8	1.5	1.1	2.3	1.3	3.7	1.3
3	1.6	0.8	2.5	1.3	3.2	1.5	1.2	0.9	2.2	1.2	3.0	1.2
4	2.2	1.4	3.8	2.0	5.2	1.7	2.8	1.3	4.1	1.4	5.2	1.1
5	1.5	0.9	2.3	1.3	3.5	1.8	1.4	1.3	2.3	1.5	3.4	1.3
6	2.0	1.2	3.5	1.8	5.1	1.6	2.9	1.2	4.1	1.4	5.0	0.9
7	1.5	1.3	3.0	2.2	5.2	2.2	2.3	1.2	3.7	1.6	4.8	1.5
8	1.7	1.2	3.5	2.0	5.6	1.7	2.6	1.3	3.9	1.5	5.1	1.2
9	1.4	0.9	2.5	1.7	4.5	2.1	2.2	1.0	3.3	1.5	4.6	1.4
10	2.3	1.7	4.3	2.1	6.0	1.5	2.7	1.4	4.6	1.4	5.4	1.0
Expectations												
11	1.9	1.1	2.8	1.7	4.5	1.8	1.6	1.1	2.5	1.4	3.8	1.3
12	1.4	0.8	2.7	1.9	3.8	2.0	1.2	0.9	2.3	1.6	3.5	1.5
13	1.6	1.0	2.6	1.7	4.2	1.8	1.3	1.0	2.3	1.5	3.8	1.3
Student-Teacher Relationships												
14	3.4	2.1	4.5	2.1	5.4	1.9	2.6	1.6	3.4	1.4	4.0	1.3
15	1.8	1.2	4.0	2.1	6.1	1.5	2.4	1.0	4.0	1.5	5.3	1.2
16	1.6	1.4	3.2	2.1	5.0	2.1	2.3	1.2	3.6	1.6	5.0	1.4
17	1.8	1.3	3.5	2.0	5.5	1.9	2.3	1.1	3.7	1.5	5.1	1.2
Demands of Teaching												
18	1.8	1.2	3.8	2.0	5.3	1.6	2.6	1.1	4.0	1.4	5.1	1.1
19	1.6	1.2	3.0	1.9	4.6	1.9	2.5	1.0	3.4	1.4	4.4	1.3
20	1.5	1.0	3.2	2.1	5.0	2.0	2.4	1.2	3.7	1.5	4.7	1.3
21	1.2	0.6	2.5	1.6	4.3	1.9	1.0	0.9	2.2	1.4	3.6	1.2
22	1.5	1.2	3.4	2.1	4.8	2.3	1.3	1.2	2.6	1.5	3.6	1.4
23	2.4	1.9	4.1	2.0	5.1	2.0	2.1	1.6	3.4	1.5	4.0	1.2
24	1.4	1.1	2.0	1.5	3.3	2.2	1.2	1.0	1.9	1.5	3.1	1.6
25	1.7	1.4	3.2	2.2	5.1	2.0	1.4	1.0	2.5	1.5	3.8	1.4

[a]For the items related to each of these variable numbers, note Table 4.

[b]These values have been rounded to the nearest tenth.